

SPC Annual Parish Meeting 16 April Annex A

Sparsholt Parish Council Chairman's Report 2015

May 2014 provided Sparsholt Parish Council with new challenges for me and for all of the Councillors. I will start with the Leavers and Joiners to the Council.

Our respected Chairman Caroline Horrill decided to stand for election as a City Councillor to replace Keith Wood who after many years serving both Sparsholt and the WCC decided to retire.

Keith consistently attended all our PC meetings and was a wise head to guide us in making decisions and being a voice to be heard when it sometimes appears that the City Council takes no heed of a Parish's views. Keith we will miss you and wish you a long and happy retirement.

Caroline, by now you will be realising what yet another onerous task you have taken on, but we know your heart will always be with us in supporting the future aspirations of Sparsholt. Caroline, as Keith did, attends our meetings to keep us informed of the events and happenings of the City Council.

Phil Bailey our County Councillor also attends our council meeting when he can or provides us with a written report of County matters that affect us.

Phil Goater as our parish councillor Highways portfolio holder, left us following frustrations with being unable to deal with a local authority who do things in their time and as an ex business person, this was obviously not to Phil's standards. However shortly after he left us things did start to happen for which he should be proud of his contribution. Phil we thank you for your efforts whilst you were a Councillor.

Joining us following the last election is John Little who has done an outstanding job of creating and developing our new village website and taken over the organisation and distribution of the Newsletter. John is also a member of the Finance sub-committee.

Katy Cobbold was co-opted and brings a welcome younger influence to the Council and has taken over my role as a school governor. Katy has 3 very young children but manages to fulfil a very important role, whilst juggling family and village life.

Andrew Osmond (Oz) was co-opted and as a farmer brings a new perspective to all things country-wise that affect us in the village. On the recent wind turbine planning application Oz was able to bring in people with a wide range of expertise on the subject. Look out Anaerobic Digester when that application comes in.

Our final addition is Sue Annesley who was also co-opted late last year and enables us to have representation for the Northwood park area of the village. Sue currently has no particular portfolio as she is recently retired and still dealing with her past business matters. However Sue manages to keep actively in touch by attending meetings and in the future will be taking a portfolio relative to the skills she brings to us. Currently we now have a full complement of Councillors which is good news indeed.

Whilst we are on the Personnel of the Council I would like to thank all the Councillors for nominating me a Caroline's successor! I feel honoured to be in such a position and promise to fulfil my duties as Chairman to the best of my ability. To this end I am very grateful to the support of Stewart Wooles my Vice Chairman and indeed all the councillors who are always ready to listen and provide support when needed.

It has been an extremely busy year and what a team of people I have that enables us to deal with situations and issues as they arise. Ian Hay tirelessly deals with anything from fallen trees, and blocked footpaths to getting quotes for the Wellhouse roof. Nigel Reid keeps us all on our toes and with his legal background asks those testing questions to ensure we make decisions carefully.

Stewart as Vice Chairman looks after Highways and chairs the Finance sub-committee. He has also been involved with the defibrillator and will be forming a new resilience team for the village, which we will be pursuing in the coming year.

Richard Summerfield is a reliable stalwart of a Councillor as one could wish for. Richard's past knowledge as the longest serving Councillor is most valuable and his organising of our village clean ups is legendary.

The one person who has been instrumental to keeping all the Councillors in line as far as local government requirements demand is Janice Whittle our clerk. We managed to bring her out of retirement once but now Janice has decided that this is now her time to definitely leave us. Janice we can't thank you enough for all you have done and we will miss you. However Janice has helped Stewart and I recruit a worthy successor in Jill Judge. Welcome Jill and we look forward to working with you.

Planning remains a workload for the Council that necessitates we have a Parish Council meeting once a month on the 3rd Thursday of each month. One month is for pure council business with an update on planning and the other month is pure planning. Here I would like to acknowledge the power of the electronic age where we can now communicate between meetings ever in the hope that our meetings can deal with matters arising in a much more timely fashion reducing the time spent sitting in meetings.

What we have achieved in the past year

We listened to residents that attended one of our meetings concerning the speed and volume of traffic through the village. We then met with Sparsholt College and Highways and finally the School and the School travel team in Winchester. The results of these meetings will follow later on in tonight's agenda.

Progress on getting things done via the City and County Council can take a frustratingly long time but one of the major achievements in the last year has been the roads. Potholes will I am sure always continue to give us problems because of the sheer volume of traffic that passes through our village.

The drain at the Plough continues to cause problems not least because of the great crested newt a protected species which has delayed the long term solution to stop this are from

flooding after heavy or prolonged rain. However we are reliably assured that once the “newt” breeding season is over the work will begin.

The playground goalmouth area has at last been repaired and replaced and the fencing painted. There are still minor parts to be concluded. I would like to take this opportunity to say a very big thank you to Wendy Dean for her tireless work and support to the playground. Wendy has raised thousands of pounds in grants towards the upkeep and provision of new apparatus.

Wendy has now handed over the reins of the playground to Charlotte Chadwick who we now look forward to working with.

The proposed Wind Turbine of some 74 metres high for Sparsholt College in a most beautiful area and one of the special dark sky areas, was rejected by the Planning Committee in Winchester for lack of consultation and poor presentation amongst other things. A number of our Councillors worked tirelessly to challenge why the college needed another turbine and one so high when it already had one on site plus the 3 at Kirton Farm for the students to learn from. We are grateful for the planning committee support and appreciate their acknowledgement that local people and local councils need to be listened to.

We held a village meeting about the new Church Farm development proposals and then wrote to the developer to confirm that the majority of the residents at the meeting supported the parish Council view that the settlement boundary must not be breached.

The Parish Council supported the installation and will maintain the defibrillator which has been installed outside on the wall of the memorial hall. This follows Tori Landers fundraising success for which the PC for which we and the village are truly grateful for.

Things coming in 2015

One of the major tasks we look forward to next is the replacement of the Wellhouse roof. The roof has been surveyed and quotes obtained for the work to commence shortly.

The noticeboards in some areas are long past their best and a couple will be replaced and the remainder will be resurfaced with drawing pin friendly surfaces!

There is also a major planning proposal about to come in for an Anaerobic Digester to be installed at Sparsholt College. Tim Jackson has already been to one of our parish council meetings to appraise all the councillors of the proposals and taken away with him a number of serious issues we have with the proposals. As a result of the meeting with us we have asked that as soon as the proposal is submitted, or preferably before it is submitted that he holds a series of public presentations. These will be held at the college but I would urge as many of you as possible to go along and look at the plans which will be displayed. Please ask as many questions as you think appropriate because make no mistake, this proposal will have a huge impact on our village and all of the surrounding villages too. I am hopeful that the college will provide posters advertising the Presentation events in a timely fashion to enable as many people as possible to attend.

Finally, thank you for listening to me and I hope you have found some of this information useful.

Sue Wood